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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINGSTON 001269

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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR CMS, SES/O, DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/SPC FOR JIM SPOO, WHA/CAR  
(KHARNE/RBUDDEN), USSOUTHCOM FOR BILL VANCIO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [EAID](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: HURRICANE DEAN: SITREP #2

#### Summary

1.( U) As of August 19, 2007, Hurricane Dean is still a category-4 hurricane, but some predictions show it increasing to a category-5 while in the vicinity of Jamaica. The latest computer models have the eye of the storm passing just south of Jamaica, meaning the most dangerous winds could strike Kingston. The government of Jamaica has urged residents of low-lying areas and landslide-prone areas to evacuate to hurricane shelters. End Summary.

#### Embassy Emergency Action Committee Meets

2.(SBU) Ambassador Johnson chaired another meeting of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) on August 19, 2007. The Embassy stood up a command center at the embassy, while USAID and OFDA will set up a second command center at the USAID building. Both sites have satellite phones available, in case other communication networks go down. The Military Liaison Office (MLO) is in contact with Southcom Headquarters and will coordinate any needed assistance after the storm is clear. MLO stated that in order for Southcom to provide assistance, the government of Jamaica must first declare a national disaster and Ambassador Johnson must then formally request Department of Defense (DoD) assistance from Southcom.

#### Voluntary Departure Safe in the US

3.(SBU) Embassy Kingston's Management Section reports that all personnel who requested voluntary departure were able to get seats on the flight yesterday, and arrived safely in Miami, FL. The Embassy travel office made follow-on reservations for all personnel to continue to their desired destinations in the US.

#### Location of Chief of Mission Personnel

4.(SBU) All Chief of Mission Employees and dependants are now safely inside the NEC or the USAID building with few exceptions for essential personnel monitoring the situation at Powell Plaza. A five person team from OFDA, along with three USAID employees, is manning a separate command center at the USAID building, approximately 1.5 miles from the NEC. All Kingston area Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) arrived at the New Embassy Compound (NEC) Saturday, August 19th. All Chief of Mission Employees and family members remaining in Jamaica are required to remain at the NEC until further notice.

5.(SBU) FMO reports the fuel supply is at about 94 percent

(approximately 24,000 gallons) and he expects full generator capacity for as many as 10 days. FMO also reports the water tank is at capacity, with 50,000 gallons of potable water on hand. GSO has procured over 45 cots as well as several air mattresses.

#### Government of Jamaica's Response

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6.(SBU) After a three-hour National Disaster Committee meeting, Friday, August 17, Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller (PM PSM) has announced all essential government personnel on leave have been recalled. The GOJ announced a curfew on Saturday, August 18, starting at 1800 hours local time. However USG personnel transiting between locations reported little or no police presence and only one police checkpoint. The GOJ also announced that the national power grid would be taken offline at approximately 1000 hours local time on Sunday, August 19, to prevent problems with live power lines being knocked down or severed. However as of 1200 hours August 19, the NEC still had power from the local grid.

#### Reports from the ground and around the island

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7.(SBU) It is raining steadily around the island, but there is little or no wind as of 1200 hours local time, Sunday, August 19. No issues were reported by employees driving to the NEC early Sunday morning. Connectivity is experiencing no issues as all landlines and cell phones working normally. The Consular officer dispatched to the Cayman Islands is working with Cayman government officials and answering telephone inquiries. The consular section is coordinating with the Overseas Citizen Services (OCS) task force, and handling a limited number of phone inquiries. The American

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Citizen Services section (ACS) is contacting the wardens and announcing the consular section will be closed on August 20-21, 2007. The ACS section is also calling major hotels and checking on local conditions throughout the island. The consular officers in Montego Bay are in contact with counterparts from the British High Commission and will have access to British Satellite Telephone in the event local phone systems are out.

8.(U) OFDA and USAID report that hurricane force winds are likely to reach Jamaica by 1330 hours local time, Sunday, August 19. The center of the storm is predicted to reach Kingston between 1600 and 1700 hours local time, Sunday, August 19.

9.(SBU) RSO reports that local guard force will be onsite at the NEC. Once winds reach high levels, the guards will be brought indoors to safe locations. Guards will be staying at Powell Plaza, and also staying inside select residences at various locations to provide security as much as possible in the conditions.

10.(U) Ambassador Johnson's Personal Statement to the People of Jamaica as well as Public Affair's press release announcing up-coming USG support have been covered extensively in print and electronic media. Ambassador Johnson has been in contact with PM PSM and Opposition Leader Bruce Golding by telephone which will be reported in a reftel.

JOHNSON